

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend Claims 1, 3, and 10 as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

inputting offer parameters for a new initiative, including an initiative time period and an initiative description;

associating customer selection criteria with the offer parameters;

determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other ~~of~~ past initiatives, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request; and

providing a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing the new initiative in a database based on the result.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said inputting step comprises inputting an initiative time period that includes an effective date and an expiration date.

4. (original) The method of claim 2, wherein said database is at least one of a decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database.

5. (original) The method of claim 2, further comprising:

determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in the database.

6. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of:

determining whether the new initiative is to be put into effect immediately;

storing the new initiative in the runtime offer database based on the determination that the new initiative is to be put into effect immediately; and

storing the new initiative in the DSS database based on the determination that the new initiative is not to be put into effect immediately.

7. (original) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of:
applying data from the DSS database to the runtime offer database periodically in a time-initiated load cycle.

8. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:
receiving, at a runtime offers subsystem, a sales request from a marketing host;
extracting key values from said sales request, said key values including customer selection criteria;
creating key structures using said key values;
compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths; and
searching said runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:
sending the most relevant initiative to the marketing host;
presenting the most relevant initiative to a customer; and
tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

10. (currently amended) A sales manager system including a sales manager workstation for creating a marketing initiative comprising:

a sales manager workstation controller including means for entering offer parameters for a new initiative and means for associating customer selection criteria with the offer parameters;
and

a trend analysis unit using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives ~~with past sales requests~~ to determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request, and wherein

a result is provided indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative.

11. (original) The sales manager system of claim 10, wherein the new initiative is stored in a database based on the result.

12. (original) The sales manager system of claim 11, wherein the database is at least one of decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database.

13. (original) The sales manager system of claim 11, further comprising:
an impact analysis unit for determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in the database.

14. (original) The sales manager system of claim 12, further comprising:
means for determining whether the new initiative needs to be put into effect immediately;
means for storing the new initiative in the runtime offer database based on the determination that the new initiative is to be put into effect immediately; and
means for storing the new initiative in the DSS database based on the determination that the new initiative is not to be put into effect immediately.

15. (original) The sales manager system of claim 14, wherein data from the DSS database is applied to the runtime offer database periodically in a time-initiated load cycle.

16. (original) The sales manager system of claim 12, further comprising a runtime offers subsystem, said runtime offers subsystem including:

a runtime offer compiler connected to the DSS database, said runtime offer compiler including means for extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database and means for transferring said new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database, wherein said runtime offer database is part of the runtime offers subsystem; and

a runtime offer evaluator connected to the runtime offer database, said runtime offer evaluator including means for extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host, means for creating key structures using said key values, means for compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths, and means for searching said runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

17. (original) The sales manager of claim 16, wherein said runtime offer evaluator further comprises:

- means for sending the most relevant initiative to the marketing host; and
- means for tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

18. (previously presented) A sales manager system comprising:

- a sales manager workstation for creating a marketing initiative, said sales manager workstation including a sales manager workstation controller including means for entering offer parameters for a new initiative and means for associating customer selection criteria with the offer parameters, a trend analysis unit using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives to determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request, and an impact analysis unit for determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in a database;

- a decision support subsystem (DSS) database connected to the sales manager for storing the new initiative;

- a runtime offers subsystem connected to the DSS database for using information from a customer request to determine a most targeted initiative; and

- a marketing host connected to the runtime offers subsystem, said marketing host including means for sending customer requests to the runtime offers subsystem.

19. (original) The sales manager system of claim 18, wherein said runtime offers subsystem comprises:

- a runtime offer compiler connected to the DSS database, said runtime offer compiler including means for extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database and means for transferring said new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database, wherein said runtime offer database is part of the runtime offers subsystem; and

- a runtime offer evaluator connected to the runtime offer database, said runtime offer evaluator including means for extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host, means for creating key structures using said key values, means for compressing

said key structures into a series of key-paths, and means for searching said runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

20. (original) The sales manager of claim 19, wherein said runtime offer evaluator further comprises:

- means for sending the most relevant initiative to the marketing host; and
- means for tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

21. (previously presented) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

inputting a set of new initiatives, wherein each initiative includes an initiative time period and an initiative description;

associating customer selection criteria with each new initiative;

determining a likelihood that each new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiatives using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request; and

providing a result indicating the effectiveness of each new initiative.

22. (original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:

selectively storing in a database new initiatives from the set of new initiatives based on the result associated with each new initiative in the set.

23. (original) The method of claim 22, further comprising:

determining an impact of each new initiative on other new initiatives in the set of new initiatives and other initiatives stored in the database.

24. (previously presented) A data processing system for creating a marketing initiative, comprising:

a memory having program instructions; and

a processor responsive to the program instructions to input offer parameters for a new initiative, including an initiative time period and an initiative description, associate customer selection criteria with the offer parameters, determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative using stored statistics reflecting hit rates based on characteristics of other past initiatives, where the hit rates indicate the number of times an initiative was selected as being relevant to a customer request, and provide a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative.

25. (previously presented) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

- (a) receiving offer parameters from a user for a new initiative;
 - (b) determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of the new initiative using stored statistics associated with other past initiatives;
 - (c) providing a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative to the user;
 - (d) receiving an indication from the user that the user is satisfied with the new initiative;
- and
- (e) storing the new initiative in a database for subsequent use.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein if said step (d) receives an indication that the user is not satisfied with the new initiative, steps (a)-(c) are repeated.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 further comprising:
determining an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in the database.

28. (previously presented) The method of claim 25 further comprising:
comparing contract obligations associated with the user with the initiative to determine whether the initiative violates any of the user's contract obligations.

29. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, wherein said step (b) comprises:
extracting key values from the new initiative;
structuring the key values into key-paths; and

comparing the key-paths of the initiative with key-paths of past initiatives.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 25, further comprising:
receiving a sales request from a customer;
searching the database to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request;
and
presenting the most relevant initiative to the customer.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 further comprising:
tracking initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 30 further comprising:
extracting key values from the sales request, said key values including customer selection
criteria; and
structuring the key structures into a series of key-paths, and
wherein said searching step searches the database using the key-paths.

33. (previously presented) A system for creating a marketing initiative comprising:
a memory having program instructions; and
a processor responsive to the program instructions such that said processor at least:
 (a) receives offer parameters from a user for a new initiative;
 (b) determines a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective prior to use of
the new initiative using stored statistics associated with other past initiatives;
 (c) provides a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative to the user;
 (d) receives an indication from the user that the user is satisfied with the new
initiative; and
 (e) stores the new initiative in a database for subsequent use.

34. (previously presented) The system of claim 33, wherein if said processor further
receives an indication that the user is not satisfied with the new initiative and repeats processes
(a)-(c).

35. (previously presented) The system of claim 33, wherein said processor further:
determines an impact of the new initiative on other initiatives stored in the database.
36. (previously presented) The system of claim 33, wherein said processor further:
compares contract obligations associated with the user with the initiative to determine
whether the initiative violates any of the user's contract obligations.
37. (previously presented) The system of claim 33, wherein said processor:
extracts key values from the new initiative;
structures the key values into key-paths; and
compares the key-paths of the initiative with key-paths of past initiatives.
38. (previously presented) The system of claim 33, wherein said processor:
receives a sales request from a customer; and
searches the database to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request
and presents the most relevant initiative to the customer.
39. (previously presented) The system of claim 38, wherein said processor:
tracks initiatives that are presented to customers to assist in market analysis.
40. (previously presented) The system of claim 38, wherein said processor:
extracts key values from the sales request, said key values including customer selection
criteria; and
structures the key structures into a series of key-paths; and
searches the database using the key-paths.
41. (previously presented) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising the
steps, performed by a processor, of:
- (a) receiving offer parameters from a user for a new initiative;
 - (b) determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective using stored statistics
associated with other past initiatives, wherein said determining comprises:

- extracting key values from the new initiative;
- structuring the key values into key-paths; and
- comparing the key-paths of the initiative with key-paths of past initiatives;
- (c) providing a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative to the user;
- (d) receiving an indication from the user that the user is satisfied with the new initiative;

and

- (e) storing the new initiative in a database for subsequent use.

42. (previously presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the key-paths are trigger values that define characteristics of the initiative.

43. (previously presented) A system for creating a marketing initiative comprising:
a memory having program instructions; and
a processor responsive to the program instructions such that said processor:

- (a) receives offer parameters from a user for a new initiative;
- (b) determines a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective using stored statistics associated with other past initiatives, wherein said processor at least:
 - extracts key values from the new initiative;
 - structures the key values into key-paths; and
 - compares the key-paths of the initiative with key-paths of past initiatives;
- (c) provides a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative to the user;
- (d) receives an indication from the user that the user is satisfied with the new initiative; and
- (e) stores the new initiative in a database for subsequent use.

44. (previously presented) The system of claim 43 wherein the key-paths are trigger values that define characteristics of the initiative.

45. (previously presented) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising the steps, performed by a processor, of:

- (a) receiving offer parameters from a user for a new initiative;

(b) determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective using stored statistics associated with other past initiatives;

(c) providing a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative to the user;

(d) receiving an indication from the user that the user is satisfied with the new initiative;

(e) comparing contract obligations associated with the user with the initiative to determine whether the initiative violates any of the user's contract obligations; and

(f) storing the new initiative in a database for subsequent use.

46. (previously presented) A system for creating a marketing initiative comprising:

a memory having program instructions; and

a processor responsive to the program instructions such that said processor at least:

(a) receives offer parameters from a user for a new initiative;

(b) determines a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective using stored statistics associated with other past initiatives;

(c) provides a result indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative to the user;

(d) receives an indication from the user that the user is satisfied with the new initiative;

(e) compares contract obligations associated with the user with the initiative to determine whether the initiative violates any of the user's contract obligations; and

(f) stores the new initiative in a database for subsequent use.

47. (previously presented) A sales manager system including a sales manager workstation for creating a marketing initiative comprising:

a sales manager workstation controller including means for entering offer parameters for a new initiative;

a trend analysis unit using stored statistics associated with past initiatives to determine a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective, wherein a result is provided indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative;

a database in communication with said trend analysis unit, wherein the database is at least one of a decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database, and wherein the new initiative is stored in the database based on the result; and

a runtime offers subsystem, said runtime offers subsystem comprising:

a runtime offer compiler connected to the DSS database, said runtime offer compiler including means for extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database and means for transferring said new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database, wherein said runtime offer database is part of the runtime offers subsystem; and

a runtime offer evaluator connected to the runtime offer database, said runtime offer evaluator including means for extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host, means for creating key structures using said key values, means for compressing said key structures into a series of key-paths, and means for searching said runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.

48. (previously presented) A method for creating a marketing initiative comprising:
receiving offer parameters for a new initiative;
determining a likelihood that the new initiative will be effective using stored statistics associated with past initiatives, wherein a result is provided indicating the effectiveness of the new initiative;
providing a database that is at least one of a decision support subsystem (DSS) database and a runtime offer database;
storing the new initiative in the database based on the result;
extracting new and updated initiatives from the DSS database;
transferring the new and updated initiatives to the runtime offer database;
extracting key values from a sales request received from a marketing host;
creating key structures using the key values;
compressing the key structures into a series of key-paths; and

searching the runtime offer database using the key-paths to determine an initiative that is most relevant to the sales request.